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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Patent No. 7,455,831 :
Vicic et al. : DECISION DISMISSING
Application No. 10/612,916 : REQUEST FOR
Issue Date: November 25, 2008 : RECONSIDERATION OF
Filed: July 7, 2003 : PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT
Attorney Docket No. : UNDER 37 CFR 1.705
05725.1222-00 :

This is in response to the APPLICATION FOR PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT—POST GRANT, filed on December 30, 2008. Patentee requests that the determination of patent term adjustment be corrected from five hundred thirty-six (536) days to nine hundred eight-three (983) days.

The request for reconsideration of patent term adjustment is **DISMISSED** with respect to making any change in the patent term adjustment determination under 35 U.S.C. § 154(b) of 536 days.

BACKGROUND

This application was filed on July 7, 2003. On November 15, 2007, a request for continued examination (RCE) was filed. On August 7, 2008, the Office mailed a notice that the initial determination of patent term adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)

to date is 536 days¹. On November 25, 2008, the application matured into U.S. Patent No. 7,455,831, with a revised patent term adjustment of 536 days. The Office determined that the 496 days of Office delay pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) and 37 CFR 1.702(b)^{2,3} overlaps with the 717 days of Office delay pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A) and 37 CFR 1.702(a)(1)^{4,5} accorded prior to the filing of the request for continued examination. As such, the Office allowed only entry of the adjustment of 717 days. No additional days of patent term adjustment were entered at issuance under the three-year pendency provision. Given the applicant delay of 181 days, the patent issued with a revised patent term adjustment of 536 (717 - 181) days.

¹ 717 days of Office delay was reduced by 181 days of applicant delay for a patent term adjustment of 536 days. No request for reconsideration of this initial determination was filed.

² Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), 37 CFR 1.702(b) provides, in pertinent part, that:

Failure to issue a patent within three years of the actual filing date of the application. Subject to the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 154(b) and this subpart, the term of an original patent shall be adjusted if the issuance of the patent was delayed due to the failure of the Office to issue a patent within three years after the date on which the application was filed under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) or the national stage commenced under 35 U.S.C. 371(b) or (f) in an international application, but not including:

(i) any time consumed by continued examination of the application requested by the applicant under section 132(b).

³ As of the filing of the RCE on November 15, 2007, the application was pending three years and 496 days.

⁴ 37 CFR § 1.702, provides grounds for adjustment of patent term due to examination delay under the Patent Term Guarantee Act of 1999 (original applications, other than designs, filed on or after May 29, 2000).

(a) Failure to take certain actions within specified time frames. Subject to the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 154(b) and this subpart, the term of an original patent shall be adjusted if the issuance of the patent was delayed due to the failure of the Office to:

(1) Mail at least one of a notification under 35 U.S.C. 132 or a notice of allowance under 35 U.S.C. 151 not later than fourteen months after the date on which the application was filed under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) or fulfilled the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 371 in an international application;

⁵ A first Office action was not mailed until August 25, 2006, fourteen months and 717 days after the application filing date, July 7, 2003.

On December 30, 2008, patentee timely submitted this request for reconsideration of patent term adjustment (with required fee), asserting that the correct number of days of Patent Term Adjustment is 983 days under the courts interpretation of the overlap provision as set forth in Wyeth v. Dudas, 580 F. Supp. 2d 138, 88 U.S.P.Q. 2d 1538 (D.D.C. 2008). Patentee asserts that pursuant to Wyeth, a PTO delay under §154(b)(1)(A) overlaps with a delay under §154(b)(1)(B) only if the delays "occur on the same day." Patentee maintains that the total non-overlapping PTO delay under §154(b)(1)(A) & (B) is 1164 (717 + 447) days as these periods do not occur on the same day.⁶ Further, given the applicant delay of 181 days, patentee asserts entitlement to 983 (1164 - 181) days of patent term adjustment.

OPINION

Patentee's interpretation of the period of overlap has been considered, but found inconsistent with the Office's interpretation of the overlap provision, 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) limits the adjustment of patent term, as follows:

to the extent that the periods of delay attributable to grounds specified in paragraph (1) overlap, the period of any adjustment granted under this subsection shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

As explained in *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f)*⁷ and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A), 69 Fed. Reg. 34283 (June 21, 2004), the Office interprets 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) as permitting either patent term adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A)(i)-(iv), or patent term adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), but not as

⁶ Patentees state that the overlapping period is 49 days, between the start of the three year period on July 7, 2006, and the issuance of the first Office action on August 25, 2006, 49 days later.

⁷ Likewise, 37 CFR 1.703(f) provides that:

To the extent that periods of delay attributable to the grounds specified in §1.702 overlap, the period of adjustment granted under this section shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

permitting patent term adjustment under both 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A)(i)-(iv) and 154(b)(1)(B). Accordingly, the Office implements the overlap provision as follows:

If an application is entitled to an adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), the entire period during which the application was pending (except for periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)), and not just the period beginning three years after the actual filing date of the application, is the period of delay under 35 U.S.C.

154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay overlap under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). Thus, any days of delay for Office issuance of the patent more than 3 years after the filing date of the application, which overlap with the days of patent term adjustment accorded prior to the issuance of the patent will not result in any additional patent term adjustment. See 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A), and 37 CFR § 1.703(f). See *Changes to Implement Patent Term Adjustment Under Twenty Year Term; Final Rule*, 65 Fed. Reg. 54366 (Sept. 18, 2000). See also *Revision of Patent Term Extension and Patent Term Adjustment Provisions; Final Rule*, 69 Fed. Reg. 21704 (April 22, 2004), 1282 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 100 (May 18, 2004). See also *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, 69 Fed. Reg. 34283 (June 21, 2004).

Further, as stated in the *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, the Office has consistently taken the position that if an application is entitled to an adjustment under the three-year pendency provision of 35 U.S.C.

154(b)(1)(B), the entire period during which the application was pending before the Office (except for periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)), and not just the period beginning three years after the actual filing date of the application, is the relevant period under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay "overlap" under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A).

This interpretation is consistent with the statute. Taken together the statute and rule provide that to the extent that periods of delay attributable to grounds specified in 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1) and in corresponding §1.702 overlap, the period of

adjustment granted shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

In this instance, the relevant period under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay "overlap" under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) is the period during which the application was pending before the Office beginning on the application filing date under 35 U.S.C. 111(a), July 7, 2003, and ending on the date of filing of a request for continued examination (RCE), November 15, 2007 (not including any other periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)). The relevant period ends with the filing of the RCE as the three-year time frame specified in 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) does not include the period subsequent to the filing of the RCE. 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i).

Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A) and 37 CFR 1.702(a)(1), 717 days of patent term adjustment were accorded during the pendency of the application for Office delay prior to the filing of the request for continued examination. There were no Office delays subsequent to the filing of the request for continued examination. Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) and 37 CFR 1.702(b), 496 days of patent term adjustment accrued for Office issuance of the patent more than 3 years after the filing date of the application.

All of the 496 days of patent term adjustment under 37 CFR 1.702(b) overlap with the 717 days of patent term adjustment under 37 CFR 1.702(a)(1). Entry of both the 496 days and the 717 days is neither permitted nor warranted. 717 days is the actual number of days issuance of the patent was delayed.

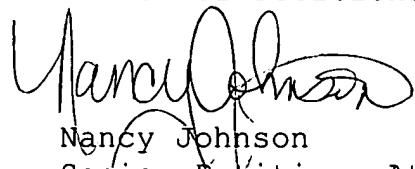
Accordingly, at issuance, the Office properly entered 536 days of patent term adjustment, having considered the 496 days of Office delay under the three-year pendency provision.

CONCLUSION

In view thereof, the Office affirms that the revised determination of patent term adjustment at the time of the issuance of the patent is 536 days.

The Office acknowledges submission of the \$200.00 fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.18(e). No additional fees are required.

Telephone inquiries specific to this matter should be directed to Senior Petitions Attorney Douglas I. Wood, at (571) 272-3231.



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